Guicciardini's

ACCOUNT

OF THE

ANCIENT FLEMISH SCHOOL

OF

PAINTING.

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PAINTING.

TRANSLATED

FROM HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE NETHERLANDS, PUBLISHED IN ITALIAN AT ANTWERP, 1567.

WITH

A PREFACE,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

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PREFACE.

No object can be more intereſting to the Engliſh Connoiſſeur, than the Ancient Flemiſh School; the only ſource, for a long time, of our art and artiſts.

Guicciardini's is the moſt ancient detail yet given, Vermander writing about half a century after.

But,

But, from the nature of the Italian's work, it is almoſt unknown to writers on painting. Unhappily he does not give preciſe dates; but theſe have, in many inſtances, been ſupplied from other authorities. A more formal commentary would be a real ſervice to the hiſtory of this engaging Art.

Our learned Author ſupplies many names, and anecdotes, unknown to others. His omiſſions are few; ſuch as I have obſerved being

ALBERT VAN OUWATER of Haerlem; born 1444, died 1515; hiſtory and portraits.

CORNELIUS ENGELBRECHT of Leyden; born 1468, died 1533; the ſame.

RICHARD AERTS; born 148-, died 1570; hiſtory.

AERTGEN of Leyden; born 1498, died 1564; the ſame. Perhaps here, Martin of Holland.

FRANCIS

Francis Crebbe (born 1475, died 1548; hiſtory) ſeems the Francis Moſtard of Guicciardini: his John Bere ſeems the John of Holland of other authors: he places Lucas Van Leyden only as an engraver: Albert Durer, a German, born 1471, died 1528, was foreign to his plan; as was Albert's maſter, Wolgemuth, born 1434, died 1519.

Our knowledge of the early Flemiſh School is extremely defective; and to our ignorance of the

the number of its artiſts, and to the ſimilarity of their works, is it owing, that many portraits in England are unchronologically imputed to Mabuſe, and a few other favourite names. Vermander, and later writers, are little to be truſted. Guicciardini does not mention Mabuſe as a portrait painter, but as excelling in hiſtory and allegory, and a diſciple of the Italian School; whereas our flatteſt old portraits are imputed to him. Hence Vertue unchronologically deſcribes the

painting of princes Arthur, Henry, and their ſiſter Margaret, done about 1495, as being of Mabuſe, who, by the beſt accounts, was born in 1496. But the quackery and errors concerning painters are infinite.

Such is the ſimilarity of the ſtyle of the early Flemiſh artiſts, a ſtyle allied to the miniatures in MSS. that where there is no mark put by the artiſt, it ſeems mere idleneſs to attempt to diſtinguiſh a looſe picture, of which no hiſ-

tory

tory remains. But Albert Durer, Mabuſe, &c. are lords of the manor; and to them all ſtrays muſt belong.

GUICCIARDINI himſelf has been miſled, in a moſt important point, by his countryman Vaſari. It was indeed believed, till lately, that John Van Eyck was the inventor of oil-painting; but Mr. Raſpe, in his work on the ſubject, London, 1781, 4to. has demonſtrated, that it was practiſed long before Van Eyck, who probably only

improved it, by ſubſtituting nut-oil for linſeed. This appears from ſeveral paintings; and from the book of Theofilus, called Tractatus Lumbardicus, written about A. D. 1000, which gives directions for oil-painting.

Eraclius, another old author, alſo publiſhed by Raſpe, evinces its uſe anterior to Van Eyck. Vaſari, who wrote about 1550, is indeed the fountain of the error.

If the Tranſlator may hazard a con-

a conjecture, oil-painting, as applied to pictures (for the ancients were no ſtrangers to painting doors, &c. with oil) was invented in the Byzantine empire, where many ſparks of ancient art remained, about the year 800. For a long time Conſtantinople furniſhed all Europe with art, and artiſts, through the medium of Venice; and to this city the art of oil-painting ſeems ſoon to have paſſed: hence its progreſs to Lombardy; and the name of Tractatus Lumbardicus, given to a book on the arts, publiſhed in that country.

country. Theofilus, the author, was apparently a Grecian monk; but as he wrote in Lombardy, his ſtyle is full of Teutoniſms, the Lombards being a Teutonic nation.

The Tranſlator hopes this pamphlet will not be unacceptable to the Connoiſſeur, eſpecially ſince the excellent Anecdotes of Painting in England have excited ſuch curioſity on the ſubject; and there are ſeveral notices here, relative to the art in this country, unknown to that work,

to

to which this may be regarded as a feeble ſupplement. A complete hiſtory, ſo far as materials can be found, of the Ancient Flemiſh School, is a work warmly to be recommended to ſome able hand. Dictionaries of painters have their uſe; but a chronological arrangement is far preferable, as forming alſo a Hiſtory of the Art. Painters of uncertain epochs might be thrown in at the moſt probable period, or in an alphabet at the end.

Guicciardini's ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT FLEMISH SCHOOL.

BESIDES the societies already mentioned, there are at Antwerp three Poetical Colleges. The first is styled *De Violiere*, or of the Violet; the second *De Goud-bloem*, or of the Marigold; the third *Den Olijf-tack*, or of the Olive Branch. The intention of their institu-

A tion

tion is to repreſent in public, after the Greek and Roman manner, at certain times of the year, and on other ſolemn occaſions, comedies, and other moral and political dramas, for the inſtruction and entertainment of the people. The chief, and moſt ancient, is the College of the Violet; moſt of the members of which are painters, who, in all the dramas, diſplay their talents.

But as painting is not only uſeful and delightful, but an art of the higheſt importance; and not only flouriſhes more at Antwerp, and Mechlin, than any where elſe, but ſpreads all over the Netherlands; it will be far from foreign to the nature of this Work, if I give

ſome

ſome account of the artiſts, who have contributed moſt to its propagation and celebrity.

In the firſt place then, it muſt not be forgotten, that there are in the Netherlands more painters of all denominations, than in many other countries put together: and as the number of artiſts is ſo great, and their exerciſe of the art ſo induſtrious, it neceſſarily followed, that many have gained an exalted reputation, both for ſkill and invention. Among the moſt induſtrious, the following may be enumerated.

John Van Eyck was, according to George Vaſari of Arezzo, in his beautiful

work on the Lives of the Painters, the firſt inventor of the art of mixing colours in oil, about the year 1410. A glorious and highly important invention, for it renders the colours almoſt eternal; nor is there any reaſon to ſuppoſe that it had been ever before known. John Van Eyck ſent ſome of his works to Italy, my native country; to the great Alfonſo, King of Naples; to the Duke of Urbino, and other princes: and, being highly valued, the great Lorenzo of Medici afterwards bought a part. Among others of his works in this country, there is at Ghent, in the church of St. Bavo, that famous picture repreſenting the triumph of the Agnus Dei; though ſome improperly ſtyle it the Adam and Eve.

Eve. This piece is ſo admirable, that Philip King of Spain, having an eager wiſh to poſſeſs it, but not daring to take it from the church, lately ordered it to be copied by the celebrated Michael Cocks; who, after employing two years in the labour, and completing it to the King's ſatisfaction, beſides other preſents, received, as the mere price, by the award of four artiſts, the ſum of two thouſand ducats; and Cocks not being even then ſatisfied, a further reward was given. But to return to Van Eyck: at Bruges, in the church of St. Donatian, there is a moſt beautiful painting by him, repreſenting the Holy Virgin, and other ſaints; and at Yperen, or Ypres, there is another of his works, eminently

ſkilful

ſkilful and memorable. John Van Eyck chiefly reſided at Bruges, then the chief city of Flanders; where he died in the higheſt reputation.[1]

Hubert Van Eyck, his brother, was of equal fame; and aſſiſted John in many of his productions.[2]

To their ſkill, and praiſe, ſucceeded Roger Vander Weyde of Bruſſels,[3] who, among other pieces, painted thoſe four wonderful hiſtorical pictures, yet to be ſeen in the court of juſtice at Bruſſels.

[1] Died, 1426. [2] Born, 1385.

WEYDE was followed by Hauſs his ſcholar, who painted ſome ſubjects for the Duke of Florence, and family of Medici.

HIS ſucceſſors were Ludovick of Louvain, Peter Criſt, Martin of Holland, and Juſt of Ghent, who painted, for the Duke of Urbino, that excellent picture of Chriſt and his Apoſtles at the Laſt Supper.

NEXT was Hugh of Antwerp,[1] whoſe work that painting is, at Florence, in the church of St. Maria Nova.

[1] Vander Goes.

LET

Let me now add, at random, ſome other celebrated deceaſed artiſts.

And in the firſt place, Dirick or Theodore of Louvain; and Quintin [Matſys] of the ſame place, famous for his figures, and among others for the exquiſite picture of our Saviour, in the church of the Virgin at Antwerp.

Jodoc[1] of Clives, a citizen of Antwerp, was celebrated for his colouring, and ſtill more for the likeneſs of his portraits; ſo that Francis I. having ſent for an artiſt, Jodoc was choſen; and proceeding to the court of that monarch,

[1] Or Juſte,

he painted portraits of Francis, his queen, and other great perſons, to his own great praiſe and emolument.

JEROM BOSCH, of Bois le-Duc, was of wonderful invention in facetious and fantaſtic ſubjects.[1]

BERNARD of Bruſſels;[2] John Bere; Matthew Cock of Antwerp; John Hemſen, near that city.

SIMON BENNING, an exquiſite painter in miniature.

GERARD, a celebrated illuminator.

[1] Died, 1500. [2] Died, 1540.

LANCELOT, admirable in delineating conflagrations; that of Troy for inſtance: theſe three were of Bruges.

JOHN MABUSE, he who firſt brought from Italy to theſe countries the art of properly drawing, and colouring, naked figures, in hiſtoric and poetical fictions.[a] His, among others, is that famous picture which is ſhewn in the great abbey of Middelburgh.

JOHN CORNELITZ of Amſterdam, a great artiſt.

LAMBERT, alſo of Amſterdam.

[a] By the beſt accounts, born 1499, died 1562.

JOHN

JOHN SCOREL, canon of Utrecht, the painter of Pope Hadrian VI. and a famous architect; who alſo imported from Italy not a few inventions, and new modes of painting.[1]

SIMON of Marignon, who reſided at Valenciennes, celebrated both for painting and literature.

JOACHIM PATENER of Bovines.[2]

HENRY of Dinant; John Bellagamb of Douay; Theodore of Haerlem;[3] and Francis Moſtard, of the ſame city, eminent in landſcape.

[1] Died, 1562.
[2] Born, 1487.
[3] Born 1410, died, 1470.

PETER COUCQ of Aloſt, great in cartoons, or deſigns for tapeſtry; and who has the peculiar praiſe of firſt bringing from Italy the canon of architecture; and who tranſlated into Flemiſh the work of Sebaſtian Serlio of Bologna, to the great advantage of the Netherlands.

JOHN of Calcker, who died while he was in Italy.

CHARLES of Yperen; Marin of Zierikzee; Lucas Hurembout of Ghent, a celebrated painter and illuminator.

NOR are the women without their ſhare of praiſe in this department; but I ſhall

I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning three.

The firſt is Suſanna Hurembout, ſiſter of the above named Lucas, who excelled in all painting, in miniature, and illumining; and was invited by Henry VIII to England, where ſhe lived many years, in univerſal favour; and at length died, loaded with wealth and honour.

The ſecond is Clara Skeyſers, alſo of Ghent, exquiſite in painting, and illumining, who paſſed eighty years in ſtrict virginity.

The third, Ann, daughter of Seghers, a phy-

a phyſician, and originally from Breda, though reſiding at Antwerp.—She died lately; and was eminent in piety and virtue.

I NOW proceed to living artiſts; among which firſt occurs Francis Florence, a painter not to be ſurpaſſed in invention and deſign; not only a ſingular artiſt, but a man of benevolence, and elegant manners. It is his praiſe to have firſt brought from Italy the art of expreſſing to the life, and with wonderful dexterity, the muſcles and ſkin of the human body.[1]

[1] Florence, or Floris, died 1570.

NEXT is William Kay of Breda,[1] a citizen of Antwerp, an admirable painter of hiſtory, but ſtill more excellent in portrait: a ſober ſerene man, and of acute genius. His nephew, Adrian Thomas Kay, is ſo happy in his art, that, in my opinion, he ſurpaſſes his uncle in expreſſion.

JOHN QUINTIN, ſon of the above-mentioned Quintin of Louvain.*

[1] Died, 1568.

* The firſt edition, 1567, folio, has here, "Jerom "Cock, an inventor, and a great publiſher in plates "of the works of Jerome Boſch, and other excel-"lent painters; thus deſerving well of the art."

MARTIN

MARTIN VOSS, wonderfully happy in colouring, invention, and portrait.'*

ANTONY WINGARD, and James Grimmer; great painters of views.[2] All theſe are of Antwerp.

GILES COIGNETTE; Michael Cocks, abovementioned, a rare and good artiſt, whoſe works are in univerſal eſteem.

JOHN BOLLE, eminent in landſcape.[3]

[1] Died, 1604.

* Ed. I. inſerts "Louis Van Hort, happy in "painting many ſubjects."

[2] Born, 1510. [3] Died, 1593.

CRISPINIAN and Henry Paludan,* the diſciple of Francis Florence, a youth of great genius, who after having reſided ſome time at Florence, went to Rome. All theſe of Mechlin.

ANTONY MORE of Utrecht, painter to King Philip, a moſt celebrated and excellent artiſt, chiefly in portrait, which he executes with ſuch ſpeed and life, that he excites admiration; and he is endowed with many other qualities.†

LAMBERT LOMBARD of Liege, a man of great character, learned, and of exact judgment; not only an exquiſite

* Paludano, Ed. I. † Died, 1575.

painter, but an eminent architect, and formerly the maſter of the abovenamed Francis Florence, and William Kay. He is an admirer of ancient coins, of which he has a great collection, daily increaſing.[1]

PETER BRUGEL of Breda, a ſedulous imitator of the fancies of Jerome Boſch, whence he is commonly called the ſecond Jerome Boſch.[2]

PETER AERTZEN, ſurnamed Lang, of Amſterdam, an artiſt of great merit and fame; and who painted the noted picture, in the church of the Virgin in that

[1] Died, 1568. [2] Died, 1570.

city,

city, which, with the ornaments, coſt nearly two thouſand crowns.

MARTIN HEMSKERK of Holland, the diſciple of John Scorel.[1]

LAMBERT VAN HORDT of Amersfort, an excellent painter and architect.

GILES MOSTARD, brother of the above Francis.[2]

PETER POURBUSS;[3] whoſe ſon, the diſciple of Francis Florence, though young, is of great expectation.

[1] Died, 1574. [2] Died, 1601. [3] Died, 1583.

GEORGE HOFNAGLE, a youth, but exquiſite in miniature, nor a mean artiſt in portrait; ſo that he is treated with much favour by the Duke of Bavaria.

JOHN VREDEMAN of Friſeland: and many others, ſo that a volume would be required to name them.

AS to the living female artiſts, I ſhall mention only four.

THE firſt is Lævina, the daughter of Mr. Simon Bruges, who, like her father, is excellent in miniature; ſo that Henry VIII alſo invited her to his court, with high rewards; where ſhe was afterwards ſplendidly married, and continued

nued in high favour with Mary, and is now in equal eſteem with Elizabeth.

ANOTHER is Catharine Hemſen, daughter of the above John, and wife of Chriſtian the famous muſician. This couple the Queen of Hungary took with her to Spain; and, before ſhe died, bequeathed a ſufficient maintenance.

THE third is Mary Beſſemer, of Mechlin, widow of the abovenamed Peter Coucq.

THE fourth is Ann Smiter, of Ghent, exquiſite in painting, and illumination.

THE works of theſe painters are not only

only ſpread through the Netherlands, but in moſt parts of the world; and merchants derive no ſmall profit from the exportation.

But it is alſo proper to mention ſome eminent artiſts in encauſtic, or painting on glaſs, inaſmuch as this department has alſo its pretenſions to importance; and Vaſari has obſerved, that the Flemings have brought it to perfection. For, not to dwell on the beauty and vivacity of the colours, they invented the mode of burning them into the glaſs, ſo as to be ſafe from the corroſion of water, wind, or even time; which was not the caſe, when they were only tempered with gum, and ſome other mixture. And the Flemings

mings alſo invented the manner of making leaden caſements.

THE firſt eminent painters on glaſs, were

ARNOLD VAN HORDT of Nimmegen, and a citizen of Antwerp; a great imitator of the Italian ſchool, and the firſt inventor of the art of burning colours into cryſtalline glaſs.

THEODORE JACOBS FELAET, an artiſt of eminent invention.

THEODORE STASS of Campen.

JOHN ACK of Antwerp, who executed

cuted the windows in St. Gudola's church, and the chapel of the Sacrament, at Bruſſels.

CORNELIS of Bois-le-Duc.

THERE ſtill flouriſh Cornelis Dale, who, with ſingular art, burns any colours, not only into glaſs, but into cryſtal, ſo that they appear like painting in oil; and his deſigns are elegant.

JODOC VEREG, a ſkilful artiſt, employed by the emperor.

JAMES FLORENCE. All of Antwerp.

JOHN STASS, ſon of the above Theodore,

dore, and the heir of his father's talents.

JOHN ZELE of Utrecht.

NOR in Architecture, and Sculpture, have excellent artiſts been wanting in the Netherlands.

SUCH were Sebaſtian Oje, of Utrecht, the celebrated architect to Charles V. and afterwards to Philip his ſon. He, to his great praiſe, planned the fortifications of Heſdin,* Charlmont, and Philipville, ſtrong towns on the frontiers.

WILLIAM KEUR of Gouda, a good architect, a ſuperior ſculptor.

* Edinfert, ed. 1.

JOHN DALE, a ſculptor and poet.

LUCAS VAN LEYDEN, a celebrated engraver.[1]

WILLIAM of Antwerp, a famous architect.

THERE ſtill flouriſh James Bruck, of St. Omers, a man of noble birth, and an excellent ſculptor, and architect; who, while the Queen of Hungary governed the Netherlands, planned Boſſu, and Marimont, and ſome grand buildings.

JOHN BOLOGNE of Douay, his diſ-

[1] Born 1495, died 1533.

ciple;

ciple; now employed by the Duke of Florence.

JOHN MINSHEEREN of Ghent, an excellent architect, and ſculptor; whoſe ſon, Lucas, is an eminent painter, the inventor of many things, and excels in poetry.

MATTHEW MANDEMAKER of Antwerp, a famous ſculptor; in the ſervice of the King of the Romans.

CORNELIS FLORENCE, brother of Francis, an excellent ſculptor, and architect; diligent and attentive; who has the praiſe of firſt bringing from Italy the art of accurately rendering the in-

ſides of caves, called by the Italians *groteſcas.**

HENRY PASCHEN of Antwerp, an excellent architect, who deſigned the palace and office of the Hanſe towns in Antwerp; and was afterwards called to London, to plan the exchange.

LAMBERT SUAF of Liege, a good architect and engraver.

JAMES IONGELING of Antwerp, an excellent ſculptor, and ſtatuary; who lately made thoſe wonderful braſs ſtatues of the ſeven planets, and Bacchus, which

* So the Latin. The Italian bears "contrafare "le grotteſche al naturale."

the

the magiſtrates of Antwerp preſented to the Prince of Parma.

WILLIAM PALUDAN, brother of the above Henry, a great and accurate ſculptor; whoſe ſon, Raphael, is alſo of high repute.

JOHN SART of Nimmegen, an excellent ſculptor; as are Simon of Delft, and Jodoc Janſon of Amſterdam, George Robins of Yperen.

THEODORE VOLCART CORNHERT, and Philip Galle, both of Haerlem; exquiſite engravers.

THE others it would be prolix to enumerate.

Most of these painters, and other artists, visit Italy, with a view of improvement, seeing ancient monuments, and forming an acquaintance with great artists; and some in hopes of fame, and making their fortune. From that country they return with more skill and repute, some loaded with wealth and honour, to this their native country; which diffuses its artists through Britain and Germany; but chiefly to Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Poland, and other northern regions, even to Muscovy; not to repeat the mention of those who, allured by honours and rewards, visit France, Spain, and Portugal.

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